AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) and (b) As per the 1997 estimates of National Sample Survey Organisation there were about 353.7 million workers out of which around 90% belonged to the unorganized sector including agriculture, construction, forests etc. Benefits of PF, pension and Deposit Linked Insurance as admissible under the EPF & MP Act have already been extended to the workers employed in certain unorganized sectors like beedi, building & Construction, poultry farms, agricultural farms, fruit gardens, cattle breeding, plantations, agarbatti, dhoop, kattha, coir making industry, brick industry etc. Workmen Compensation benefits are admissible to workers employed in construction/repair of any building, road, bridge, canal, loading and unloading of any vehicle, tapping of palm trees, plantations, horticultural operations, forestry, bee keeping, mechanized farming, spraying/dusting of insecticides/pesticides in agricultural operations, mechanized harvesting and threshing operations *etc.* The workers employed in slate pencil manufacturing establishments employing one or more persons are covered under the ESI Scheme. However labour laws are presently not applicable to domestic workers. Second National Commission on Labour set up by the Government to suggest rationalization of the existing labour laws have also been asked to suggest an umbrella legislation for ensuring minimum level of social protection to the workers in the unorganized sector.

Bill to ban contract labour

4491. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a new Bill is being introduced in the Parliament to lift ban on contract labour;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor;

(c) whether a regulatory authority would be put in place so as to prevent misuse of the proposed legislation; and

(d) by when the Bill is likely to be introduced in the Parliament?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) to (d) In the wake

of economic liberalization as well as judgements of various courts, proposals have been received from social partners to bring about changes in the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970. The changes or amendments to be made, if any, after taking into consideration all relevant factors, have not yet been finalised.

Audit of Employees Provident Fund payments

4492. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether in the course of recent audit of Employees Provident Fund payments, it was found that money was not being credited to individual accounts of the subscribers for almost three years, as reported in the 'Indian Express', New Delhi Edition, dated 9th April, 2001;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for default in P.F. payments and whether the backlog is proposed to be cleared soon and accounts updated; and

(c) whether Employees Provident Fund authorities have tried to plug loopholes in the system after a recent detection in audit, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) to (c) Default in PF payment is generally attributable to industrial sickness, recession, market fluctuation in demand, technological obsolescence etc. In order to analyze cases of defaulting/inoperative establishments, the Employees Provident Fund Organisation has developed a computer software. Based on the result of the computer analysis, the EPF Organisation had launched a drive to secure compliance from such defaulting/inoperative establishments. The Organisation has succeeded in securing compliance from 35021 establishments and PF account statements as on 28.2.2001 have been issued to 3742341 subscribers. Necessary mechanism has also been evolved to detect default on month-to-month basis so as to enable the organization to take prompt action against the defaulters.